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AUTHOR Garrett, R. M.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The educational reform movement of the 1980s forced superintendents and school boards to critically reexamine the rationale used for principal evaluation. The 1985 South Carolina Educational Improvement Act forced all administrators to objectively define and evaluate educational goals for both students and personnel. Consequently, the Abbeville School District (South Carolina) opted to base principal evaluation on the achievement of district, community, and school goals as measured by the congruence between established goals and student achievement data. The district reconnoiters data from community perceptions, teacher and staff perceptions, student perceptions, and principal perceptions and compares those to student achievement test data in each school. The information is computer analyzed with an individual report being provided to each principal. The district superintendent meets with the principal to discuss the results of the analysis and make plans for correcting the deficiencies. Thereby, the principal receives a more objective evaluation of performance and a plan of improvement to correct problems. (MLF)

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REMOVING THE BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVENESS: A THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

R. M. GARRETT
J. L. FLANIGAN
M. D. RICHARDSON

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A paper prepared for presentation at the **Conference-within-a-Convention** at the annual meeting of the **American Association of School Administrators** in New Orleans, LA on March 2, 1991.

Dick Garrett is Superintendent of Schools in the Abbeville (SC) School District; **Jack Flanigan** is associate professor and Coordinator of Educational Administration; and **Mike Richardson** is associate professor of Educational Administration; both at **Clemson University**, Clemson, SC. 29634 (803-656-3482).

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REMOVING THE BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVENESS: A THEORITICAL AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's
I will not reason and compare;
My business is to create.

--William Blake

ABSTRACT

Principal evaluation is a conceptual and practical reality for administrators. Historically, principals have been informally evaluated on management functions, ie., keeping the building clean, maintaining good discipline, and turning reports in on time. The educational reform movement of the 1980's forced superintendents and school boards to critically re-examine the rationale used for principal evaluation, and even reconcile the objectives of principal evaluation. However, throughout the entire period, the focus was again on the traits of successful principals. And although the focal point of the evaluation had changed, from administrative management to instructional leadership, the means of

evaluation were basically congruent with past practices, that is, evaluating individual traits, not competencies.

The 1985 South Carolina Educational Improvement Act (EIA) forced all administrators to objectively define and evaluate educational goals for both students and personnel. Consequently, one school district opted to base principal evaluation on the achievement of district, community, and school goals as measured by the congruence between established goals and student achievement data. The district reconnoiters data from community perceptions, teacher and staff perceptions, student perceptions, and principal perceptions and compares those to student achievement test data in each school. The information is computer analyzed with an individual report being provided to each principal.

The district superintendent meets with the principal to discuss the results of the analysis and make plans for correcting the deficiencies. Thereby, the principal receives a more objective evaluation of performance and a plan of improvement to correct problems. The system is more viable than the traits approach and incorporates data from other clientele who have a stake in the operation of the school.

INTRODUCTION

Why would a school district in South Carolina choose to examine an alternative model of principal evaluation? The answer lay partly in the need to

attract and retain the best possible administrators and also partly in response to the mandates of South Carolina's Educational Improvement Act (EIA). Subdivision D, Subpart 1 of the EIA specified "the establishment of a statewide program for the evaluation of all principals."

The EIA of 1984 provided for the establishment of a principal incentive program to reward practicing principals who demonstrated superior performance directing their schools. At its meeting on July 10, 1985, the South Carolina State Board of Education approved the criteria for principals' incentive pay. They also identified and selected program models and asked specified districts to pilot test the approved models during the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years. With the passage of the 1989 State Appropriations Act, provisions were made for statewide implementation of the Principal Incentive Program during the 1989-90 school year.

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

Evaluation, both formal and informal, takes place in all public school districts. Consideration should be given at the district level to the development of broad criteria of successful performance which could be adapted for use with local school principals. Frequently evaluation judgments are made informally by the superintendent for the purposes of determining job description or deciding whether the individual principal will be continued, or to indicate areas of growth.

Salary, promotion and contract renewal make unfortunate primary goals for evaluation. More recently however, the evaluation process is being used to promote the professional growth of the school principal. This new focus is a promising development because systematic evaluation can and should be a tool for the improvement of leadership performance. It should hold a higher place among the priorities of the district superintendent and the board of education in all school districts.

Evaluation involves making judgements (Roth & Preskill, 1982). Inevitably, someone must assemble the data available and apply a set of values to the data collected. Personnel evaluation involves a series of actions regarding the collection of data--observing, recording, analyzing, and reporting. Even the simplest of evaluation approaches involve a similar series of actions. Typically, the evaluation of school principals involves actions by either one person or a group of people. Or, at the other extreme, principal evaluation could involve the absence of action, meaning that principals are not evaluated.

Any evaluator of principals carries a certain amount of baggage, i.e., bias, worries, aspirations, prior contact with the person, competence, stability, sensitivity, experience and beliefs. Therefore, principal evaluation efforts must focus on the ability of the evaluator to be objective and concerned about the individual being evaluated and the welfare of the school district. Objectivity by the evaluator leads to diagnostic judgement, which requires discrimination

between practice, techniques, skills and knowledge on the part of the evaluated principal, not between individuals (Murphy, Hallinger & Peterson, 1985).

Another critical element of principal evaluation is the decision concerning who will conduct the evaluation. The superintendent's need to delegate responsibility for various aspects of the evaluation process is constantly in conflict with the organizational need for a well structured support system for the evaluation. Several of these inherent conflicts are reflected most dramatically in state reform efforts to capitalize on principal evaluation as a vehicle for enhancing educational quality (Cary, 1980). Consequently, many of the state mandated programs must be modified to accommodate the needs of local school systems. The model described herein represents such a modification.

FEATURES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA PRINCIPAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The South Carolina Principal Incentive Program is to be administered through the school districts of the state. Allocation of funds to each district is based on the number of principals and vocational center directors employed by the district. With the broad state requirements, the operation of the program and the decision regarding incentive awards are the responsibility of the school district. An underlying premise of the Principal Incentive Program is that

principals may be held responsible for practice associated with student achievement and effective utilization of resources. The program is based on performance outcomes, including student achievement, attention, dropout rate, awards, and social and emotional development in the school setting. The results are to be used to develop specific remediation efforts.

One of the three variations of the Principal Incentive Program, The Management by Results Model, was approved by the State Board of Education. This model incorporates South Carolina's Principal Evaluation Pròǵram as the preliminary process for determining incentive award recipients. This model requires a rating of "superior" or better on the Principal Evaluation Instrument. The model also requires the successful completion of predetermined objectives during the school year. The principal with the assistance of the evaluator, prepares performance objectives and submits those objectives to the Principal Incentive Committee in the district for review and approval. After receiving approval, the principal initiates activities designed to achieve the objectives. At the end of the school year, the committee determines whether or not the objectives have been achieved. The principal receives an incentive award on the basis of achieving the objectives and a "superior" or better rating on the Principal Evaluation Instrument.

The state program strongly suggests that each school district have a coordinator to facilitate the effective and efficient operation of the principal

evaluation program. The language of the state policy directs that each participating district shall have some staff member who will assume responsibility for seeing that the program is properly implemented.

A second model approved and tested by the state department of education is termed the Extended Evaluation Model of the South Carolina Principal Incentive Program. This model incorporates South Carolina's Principal Evaluation Program as one component of the program for determining incentive award recipients. In addition to requiring a rating of "superior" or better on the Principal Evaluation Instrument, The Extended Evaluation Model requires the principal to demonstrate superior performance and productivity as compared to that of other principals in the school district. The model utilizes an extended summative evaluation process drawing upon data from sources beyond those included in the Principal Evaluation Program. Districts administering this model collect and analyze extended evaluation data for all district principals, not just those requesting incentive pay consideration.

The Principal Incentive Committee establishes weights and standards for the performance standards utilized in the evaluation process. Following data collection and analysis, the committee ranks all principals. Principals requesting incentive pay receive incentive awards up to a maximum of $5,000.00 on the basis of the committee's recommendation and a rating of "superior" on the Principal Evaluation Instrument.

A third program for the evaluation of South Carolina Principals, the Combination Model of the Principal Incentive Program, incorporates the South Carolina Principal Evaluation Program as the preliminary process for determining incentive award recipients. In addition to requiring a rating of "superior" or better on the Principal Evaluation Instrument, the Combination Model requires the principal to select one of two evaluation procedures to determine incentive awards. The principal may select from the "Exceeds Performance or the "Performance Objective" procedure. Both procedures use a point basis to determine the size of the award.

DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TEST

During its development, the South Carolina principal evaluation instrument was evaluated for both reliability and validity. A formal evaluation of the instrumentation was conducted by a consortium of higher education institutions across the state. The results indicated that the instrument was valid and that the 24 performance statement reflected what a principal should do in relation to what they actually do. Results of the 1986-87 field test indicated strong reliability, or internal consistency, as well as appropriate discrimination among the 24 performance statements.

THE ABBEVILLE MODEL

The Abbeville Model for Principal Evaluation was developed in response to the need identified by both practicing principals and the district administrative team. Both groups viewed the Principal Evaluation Program and its three variations as redundant and time consuming. Consequently, both groups met and agreed upon the following terms for the Abbeville Model:

1. the superintendent will be the chief evaluator for principals;
2. all principals will be evaluated;
3. the evaluation would constitute only one part of the documentation used for assignment and/or employment;
4. the overall purpose of the evaluation will be to improve instruction;
5. the secondary purpose of the evaluation is to reward high performing principals;
6. the district coordinator for the program is the Director of Personnel;
7. the evaluation cycle will be the academic year--July 1 through June 30;
8. each principal will be oriented to the evaluation system and have a personal orientation conference including a discussion of and agreement on specific goals and objective for that principal to accomplish during the academic year; and,

9. each principal will have the option of competing for a principal incentive award.

In addition, the following assumptions are the foundation on which the Abbeville Principal Evaluation Model is based:

1. The principal's productivity can be evaluated.
2. The principal should understand what is expected regarding their performance. Responsibilities and expectations should be stated in written form and should be clear and carefully delineated.
3. The principal should know to whom to look for direction and supervision and should understand that evaluation is an inherent component of accountability.
4. Standards of excellence should be designed to be used by the principal as measures of performance.
5. Performance objectives, related to the standards of excellence, should be formulated cooperatively by the principal and superintendent and used to evaluate performance.

Abbeville School District Principal Evaluation Model

The Abbeville County Principal Evaluation Model or the Abbeville Principal Evaluation (APE) is made up of four components, which, when taken together indicate the performance of a school principal with respect to other district principals. The four components are:

I. the results of the South Carolina School Needs Assessment Survey, worth a total of 30 "component points" of the composite score of the APE.
II. the results of the South Carolina School Performance Report indicating the School Gain Index (SGI), worth a total of 40 component points of the composite score of the APE.
III. the appropriate criteria taken from the South Carolina Principal Evaluation Program (PEP) in the form of a portfolio, worth a total of 20 component points of the composite score of the APE.
IV. a 10 point negotiated area, unique to each school called the Individual School Innovation Component.

Criterion I - Leadership

Performance Statement		Source
1-1	Communicates School Goals	Needs Assessment Survey
1-2	Curriculum and Instructional Quality	Needs Assessment Survey
1-3	Implements Effective Teaching and Learning	Needs Assessment Survey
1-4	Involves All Audiences in Problem Solving and Decision Making	Needs Assessment Survey
1-5	Effective Decisions Based on Relevant Data	Observation - Conference
*1-6	Meets District Requirements - Administers Budgeting, Purchasing, and Accounting System	Annual School Audit

Criterion II - Student Development & Achievement

2-7	Monitors, Assesses, and Reports Student Performance	Needs Assessment Survey

2-8	Promotes Positive Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Growth	Needs Assessment Survey
2-9	Standardized Test Scores - Meets Requirement for Incentive Grant Award	School Performance Report
2-10	Communicates High Expectations for Student Achievement	Needs Assessment Survey
2-11	Student Attendance Meets Requirement	School Performance Report
2-12	Recognizes Students for Outstanding Performance in School Related Activities	Needs Assessment Survey

Criterion III - Staff Selection, Evaluation, & Development

3-13	Personnel Section - All Clear - Selection and Assignment of Staff	BEDS
*3-14	Personnel Evaluation	Evaluation Records
*3-15	School-Based Staff Development Program	

Criterion IV - Interpersonal Competence

4-16	Sensitivity	Observation - Conference
4-17	Recognizes and Manages Conflict	Observation - Conference

Criterion V - School-Community Relations

5-18	Involves Parents and Community in School's Program	Needs Assessment Survey
5-19	Assesses and Utilizes Community Resources	Needs Assessment Survey
5-20	Makes Community Aware of School Program	Needs Assessment Survey

Criterion VI - School Climate

6-21	Plans for Safety of Personnel and Students	Needs Assessment Survey
6-22	Maintains Appropriate Student Behavior	Needs Assessment Survey

Criterion VII - Personal/Professional Development

*7-23	Certification Status and EIA Mandate	
*7-24	Self-Improvement Plan	

*** Portfolio Required**

Component I
South Carolina School Needs Assessment Survey

The South Carolina Needs Assessment Survey is given in the spring to teachers, parents, and students where appropriate (fifth grade and higher) in order to ascertain their perceptions of six school performance indicators:

1. Instructional leadership of the principal
2. Emphasis on academics
3. High expectations
4. Positive school climate
5. Frequent monitoring
6. Positive home-school relations

Results are reported on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible score. The scores on each item are reported as the percent of the total respondents on each item in each of 5 categories:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

These scores are reduced to a number equivalent. The mean and standard deviation are reported for each item and each school performance indicator. Consequently, the perceptions of the respondents may be weighed across and within the performance indicators, and across schools.

In Abbeville County, inspection of past data indicates that a 1 standard deviation adjustment of the composite scores in each respondent group (teachers, students, and parents) allow the high schools and middle school to compete with the elementary schools on a reasonably even footing. When this method is applied to the past survey data, the high schools (including the Career Center) and middle school collectively, have the following distribution with respect to various levels of performance (see below).

Level	High and Middle		Elementary	
	Items	Percent	Items	Percent
Exemplary	11	12.2	25	23.3
Superior	23	25.5	21	19.4
Satisfactory	52	57.8	46	42.6
Needs Improvement	3	3.3	13	12.0
Unsatisfactory	1	1.1	3	2.7

The above table does not take into account the differences between the state grouping of schools generated by the South Carolina School Performance Program. There are differences, but they are small, inconsistent, and, for our work, insignificant.

Levels of Performance

The levels of performance noted in the above table are devised by the following method. In each area such as Instructional Leadership of the Principal or Positive School Climate there are three respondent groups; teachers, students, and parents. Each group's scores are entered in a table and the mean and standard deviation for each group is calculated. The levels are then defined as follows:

Exemplary - Greater or equal to 1.6 sd above the mean
Superior - From 0.6 sd to 1.5 sd above the mean
Satisfactory -0.5 standard deviations (sd) from the mean in either direction
Needs Improvement - From 0.6 to 1.5 sd below the mean
Unsatisfactory - Greater than 1.6 sd below the mean

Weighting

It is generally agreed that teachers have a more accurate impression and perception of the school in which they work and more knowledge of the outstanding qualities of the school and more information from which to judge the school program. Consequently, teachers' responses should be weighted more heavily than those of either the parents or the students. The

weighting is as follows:

Teachers	2x
Parents	1x
Students	1x

After the levels are ascertained, points are awarded on the following basis:

Level	Students and Parents	Teachers
Exemplary	4 points	8 points
Superior	3 points	6 points
Satisfactory	2 points	4 points
Needs Improvement	1 point	2 points
Unsatisfactory	0 points	0 points

These "ranking points" are then added, differentiating among principal's performance. These ranking points are then converted to a percentage of the maximum amount awarded for the total program by using the top ranked principal's number of ranking points and setting that equal to 30 (the total allowable points for the entire component "component points"). Other principals' ranking points will be a percentage of the top ranked principal's points and that percentage will be multiplied by 30 to arrive at their respective number of "component points" for the components.

Component II
South Carolina School Gain Index

The South Carolina School Gain Index is a numerical representation of school productivity taking into account student achievement scores, student attendance, and teacher attendance. It is the basis for School Incentive Awards. This component is worth 40 total component points.

In order to be eligible for a Principal Incentive Award, the school must have a School Gain Index that is positive or that shows substantial improvement from the previous year's score. Substantial being defined as an improvement of at least 20 percentage points in "percent rank in group."

The component points for this section will be calculated as follows: Each school is assigned a percentile rank within their group. This percentile rank will be multiplied by the total available component points (40) and those points will be awarded to the principal.

Component III
Principal Portfolio

This is the most subjective part of the APE. The principal will prepare a portfolio consisting

of documentation on the successful completion of the remaining parts of the South Carolina Principal Evaluation Program (see attachment). In addition to this portfolio, the principal may desire to document anything not covered in the other areas of this evaluation, such as any plan or program that may mitigate some of the results from the other two components or plans or procedures that could substantially alter further results and are not generally known to parents, teachers, or students. The awarding of points for these unanticipated plans or programs is at the discretion of the superintendent.

The sections of the portfolio will be graded by the superintendent taking into account:

- the appropriateness of the material presented relative to the performance standard;
- the correct use of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary for the intended audience;
- the quality of the reproduction of the written material; and
- the impact of the material relative to the school's goals and objectives.

The performance statement documentation within the portfolio will be judged and ranking points awarded by the following scale:

Exemplary -◊ 4 points
- ◊ Exceeds requirements
- ◊ Shows creative, innovative thought
- ◊ Considers all ramifications
- ◊ Has been presented and accepted by intended audience
- ◊ Is in force or soon will be implemented
- ◊ Likely to positively impact on school program or identified need
- ◊ Utilizes broad based, appropriate resources

Superior -◊ 3 points
- ◊ Exceeds requirements
- ◊ Does not engender major positive changes, but likely will improve school
- ◊ Narrow scope, limited resources

Satisfactory - ◊ 2 points
- ◊ Meets requirements

Needs Improvement - ◊ 1 point
- ◊ Barely meets requirements
- ◊ Written material poorly constructed, illegible, messy, improper grammar, vocabulary, etc.

Unsatisfactory -◊ Zero points
- ◊ Does not meet requirements

These "ranking points" are then added, differentiating between principals' performance. These ranking points are then converted to a percentage of the maximum amount awarded for the total program by using the top ranked principal's number of ranking points and setting that equal to 20 (the total allowable points for the entire component "component points"). Other principals' ranking points will be a percentage of the top ranked principal's points and that percentage will be multiplied by 20 to arrive at their respective number of "component points" for the components.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The principal is required to submit documentation on five of the 24 performance statements. The principal evaluation plan addresses those necessary portfolio performance statements that can be adequately addressed by district office staff and not included in the formal portfolio presentation. Basically, there are three performance statements the principal must satisfy:

Performance Statement #8: **Establishes program for social, intellectual, and emotional growth.**

Performance Statement #19: **Utilizes community resources**

Performance Statement #24: **Develops self improvement plan**

In actual practice, statements #8 and # 24 are combined along with the School Innovation portion of the evaluation, and in a written document, would outline the **School Improvement Plan** for the entire school year. This **School Improvement Plan** is submitted to the superintendent in August for review. Shortly thereafter, the superintendent and principal meet, analyze the **School Improvement Plan**, and reach agreement on the expected outcomes for the principal and the school. The **School Improvement Plan** contains the principal's personal goals and objectives, the school's goals and objectives, and the program description or goals and objectives that provide for the "social, intellectual and emotional growth" of the students.

Performance Statement #8 is substantially the same as paperwork currently required of the guidance counselors in the schools. For their evaluation, the guidance counselors must address the social and emotional growth of the students, but the principal must also address the intellectual growth of the students. The School Gain Index, the School Improvement Report test score section and some other measure are helpful in addressing this requirement. The **School Improvement Plan** should be logically and sequentially developed and planned and draw upon many sources. The sources include both formal and informal data, faculty and staff input, and community comments. The positive side of this program is that it clarifies plans for the future, and the plan could easily be used during the first faculty meeting of the school year to communicate values and priorities and setting definite expectation for the upcoming school year.

Component IV
Individual School Innovation

In a meeting with the chief evaluator, each principal will present a program of particular interest to their school. This program may embody a certain focus such as school climate or positive home-school relations or may be intended to affect a certain achievement area such as science or higher order thinking skills. The program should be structured so that there are measurable outcomes. At the end of the school year, the principal will demonstrate through proper documentation the effect that the program has had on the school. This component is designed to foster innovation at the school level, and after each project's approval, the school is completely responsible for its implementation. These projects need not be for only one year but may be of longer duration with interim outcomes stated so that their effectiveness may be adequately judged.

Summative Evaluation

The School Gain Index component of the APE will not be known until the South Carolina Department of Education publishes the results, normally in November of the following academic year. However, the other components will have been judged and points awarded in the spring of the current academic year. The principals will have a pre-summative conference with the superintendent sometime around the end of school depending on the reporting of the results of the Needs Assessment Survey. If statewide standardized testing results have been received, they will be a point of discussion in the conference, even though they have no direct bearing on the evaluative process. Tentative plans, goals, and objectives for the subsequent academic year will be formulated at this conference.

On receipt of the School Gain Index, the component points from all four areas will be added together, and the principals ranked according to their total points. Each principal will have a summative conference with the superintendent where all four components will be discussed and plans, goals, and objectives will be initiated as necessary. Principal Incentive Grants will be awarded to the highest performing principals that have opted to join that program.

Appeals

The appeals process for the Principal Incentive Program is the same as the process for the Principal Evaluation program. If a principal wishes to appeal the decision of the evaluator, the appeal is presented to the evaluator in writing within five working days of the final summative conference. The written appeal will be adjudicated by the evaluator and the decision will be given to the appellant within five working days. If further appeals are necessary, the principal will notify the Principal Incentive Committee within five working days, the committee will hear the appeal and render a decision within 10 working days. Further appeals will be made to the Abbeville County Board of Trustees, whose decision is final.

CONCLUSIONS

The Abbeville Principal Evaluation (APE) Model is founded on a solid foundation of broad based data including the school, community, and student achievement. The model is measured with valid instrumentation with allowance for addressing particular schools needs. For any superintendent or principal who is concerned about professional growth, coupled with school improvement, this model offers a variety of opportunities, particularly by increasing student achievement and community acceptance of the school.

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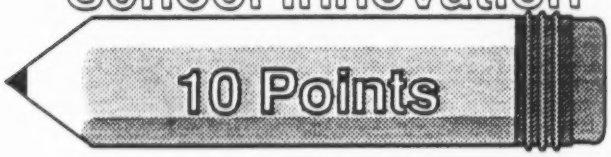
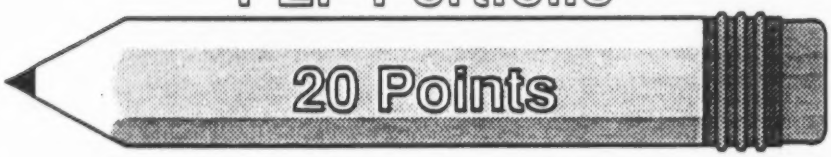
Components

School Innovation

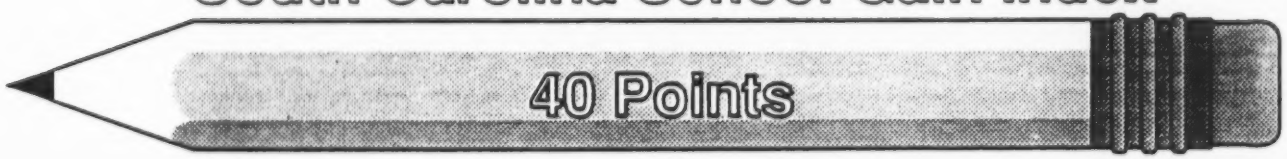


PEP Portfolio



Needs Assessment Survey

South Carolina School Gain Index



Abbeville County Model
Principal Evaluation